

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 EB-11 IO-14 SCEM-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19

AID-20 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06

SIL-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 /211 W
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FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4893

INFO USDOC WASHDC

DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 2118

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, MT

SUBJ: MALTA OIL MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

REF: A. STATE 203014 (NOTAL)

B. VALLETTA 2058 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY JOE CAMILLERI INTERCEDED OCT. 26 ON BEHALF TWO LOCAL BUSINESSMEN REPRESENTING MALTESE CONSORTIUM INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING NEW PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING COMPANY IN MALTA. GROUP DESIRES INITIALLY TO KNOW WHETHER ANY AMERICAN ASSOCIATED COMPANIES WILLING OR ABLE SELL REFINED PRODUCTS TO THEM. END SUMMARY.

2. MR. BARTH ATTARD, CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR PANTA LESCO INTERNATIONAL LTD., DESIGN, ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL
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ENGINEERS AND CONTRACTORS, AND MR. HARRY FALZON OF ASSOCIATED

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS AND MALTA VEHICLE AND PLANT SERVICES, WERE PRESENTED TO AMBASSADOR ON OCT. 26. THEY INDICATED THEY REPRESENT A CONSORTIUM OF LOCAL BUSINESS INTERESTS, WHICH MAY INCLUDE GOM PARTICIPATION, WHO PLAN TO ESTABLISH A NEW CHAIN OF GAS STATIONS. PROPOSED NEW COMPANY WOULD PRESUMABLY REPLACE BP WHICH WITHDREW FROM LOCAL MARKET LAST JANUARY FOLLOWING A DISPUTE WITH GOM. ONLY SHELL AND ESSO ARE CURRENTLY MARKETING PETROLEUM PRODUCTS LOCALLY. BOTH COMPANIES, HOWEVER, ARE EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES DUE TO GOVERNMENT IMPOSED PRICE CONTROLS.

3. ATTARD AND FALZON ALSO INDICATED POSSIBLE ACCESS TO CRUDE OIL, WHICH COULD BE OLD OR EXCHANGED FOR REFINED PRODUCTS IF A FOREIGN DISTRIBUTOR IS INTERESTED. IN THIS CONTEXT WE CAUTIONED ATTARD AND FALZON REGARDING "HOT" LIBYAN OIL, INDICATING NEITHER USG NOR PRIVATE U.S. COMPANIES WOULD LOOK FAVORABLY ON MARKETING OF OIL, OWNERSHIP TO WHICH IS IN DISPUTE. (SEE REFTELS.) ATTARD AND FALZON BACKED OFF AT THIS POINT ON CRUDE OIL AND SAID THEIR CURRENT INTEREST IS ONLY IN THE AVAILABILITY OF REFINED PETROLEUM PRODUCTS. WE AGREED TO INITIATE A PRELIMINARY CONFIDENTIAL INQUIRY ON THEIR BEHALF.

4. COMMENT: MALTA VEHICLE AND PLANT SERVICES LTD. IS A PRIVATE CONTRACTING FIRM WHICH DOES MOST OF ITS BUSINESS WITH GOM. BOTH ATTARD AND FALZON LEFT THE IMPRESSION THEIR INQUIRY HAS HIGH LEVEL GOM SUPPORT. IN VIEW OF THE OBVIOUS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES BOTH SHELL AND ESSO ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING, THEY COULD NOT HOPE TO SUCCEED IN THIS VENTURE WITHOUT CLEAR GOM UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION. END COMMENT.

5. WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S EXPLORING WHETHER ANY US COMPANIES MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN SUPPLYING PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TO A NEW MALTESE COMPANY. PLEASE ADVISE.
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